Canada-Alberta Labour Market Agreement
For Persons with Disabilities
2004 – 2005 Report

OVERVIEW

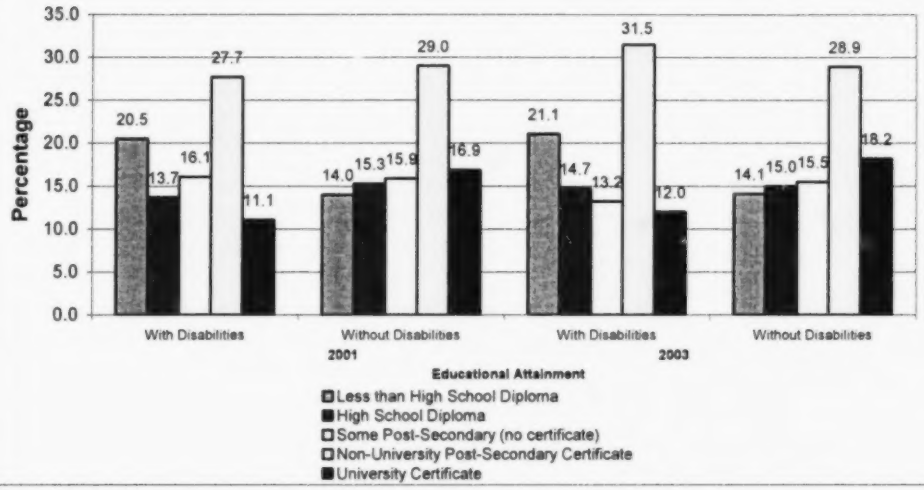
The Government of Alberta is committed to ensuring all Albertans have the skills, knowledge and supports they need to be successful in their lives and in society. In fulfilling this commitment there is recognition that some Albertans, such as persons with disabilities, may require personal, learning and employment supports in order to reach their full potential. To help Albertans with disabilities improve their lives and fully participate in Alberta society, 12 provincial ministries administer 28 disability related programs at a cost of $2.1 billion dollars annually.

The report "*Alberta Profile on Persons with Disabilities in the Labour Force*" indicates there are more than 350,000 individuals with one or more disabilities in Alberta. Findings from the *Survey on Labour and Income Dynamics* (*SLID*) (Statistics Canada, 2004) show there are important differences in the educational attainment, employment rate, and income of adult Albertans with and without disabilities[1]

Educational attainment is an important factor in the overall success and well being of Albertans. About 20 percent of working age (16-64 years) Albertans with disabilities did not complete high school, compared to 14 percent of those without disabilities. Albertans with disabilities were more likely to obtain certification at a non-university post-secondary institution than at a university. Albertans with disabilities were less likely to obtain a university degree than Albertans without disabilities. Between 2001 and 2003 there was a slight increase in the proportion of Albertans with disabilities who completed non-university post-secondary education. Overall, Figure 1 demonstrates that in 2003, 43.5% of adult Albertans with a disability had a post secondary-certificate, compared with 47.1% of adult Albertans without a disability.

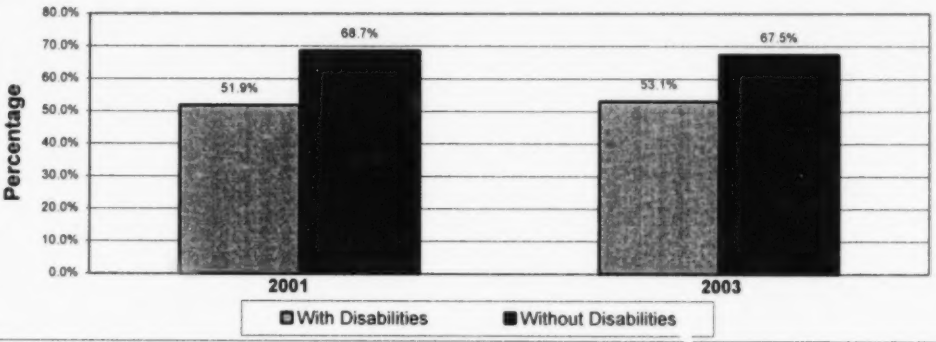
[1] The *SLID* identifies "persons with disabilities" as those who report any difficulty doing any of the activities of daily living, and those who report a physical condition or mental condition or health problem that reduces the amount or kind of activity they can do in any of a few different types of situations, including home, work, school, leisure activities or transportation.

Figure 1. Educational Attainment for Adults 16-64 With and Without Disabilities
Alberta, 2001 and 2003



While educational attainment by Albertans with and without disabilities is similar, there is a significant disparity in their employment rates (the number of persons employed, expressed as a percentage of the total population 16 years of age and over). The employment rate for Albertans with disabilities is significantly lower than that for Albertans without disabilities as demonstrated in Figure 2.[2] However, the data indicates this difference lessened slightly between 2001 and 2003.

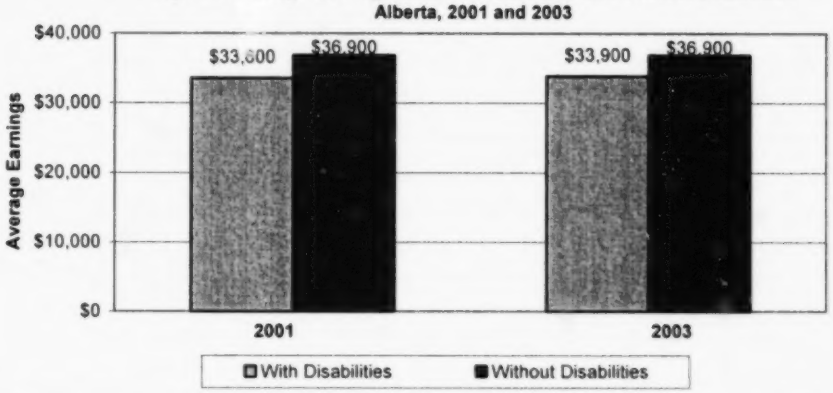
Figure 2. Employment Rate for Persons Aged 16-64, With and Without Disabilities
Alberta, 2001 and 2003



[2] Individuals are considered "employed" only if they are employed for the entire year. As people who are employed part of the year are excluded from this data, employment rates are somewhat underestimated.

This disparity also extends to the earned income (wage/salary and self-employment income)[3] of Albertans aged 16-64 years, with and without disabilities, as illustrated below. Between 2001 and 2003, the average earned income for persons with disabilities in Alberta increased slightly (Figure 3). However, in 2003, 26 percent of Albertans with disabilities reported no earned income, compared with 11 percent of Albertans without disabilities (Statistics Canada, *SLID,* 2004*)*. This means that Albertans with disabilities are more likely than those without disabilities to have government transfers as their only source of income.

Figure 3. Average Earnings of Adults 16-64, With and Without Disabilities Alberta, 2001 and 2003



MULTILATERAL FRAMEWORK

As part of the Government of Alberta's ongoing efforts to help its citizens fully participate in society, the Minister of Alberta Human Resources and Employment approved the Multilateral Framework for Labour Market Agreements for Persons with Disabilities with other Federal-Provincial-Territorial Social Services Ministers in December 2003.

Alberta's goal of helping Albertans with disabilities be successful in the workplace is supported by the Multilateral Framework's objectives of:

- enhancing the employability of persons with disabilities,
- increasing the employment opportunities available to persons with disabilities and,
- building on existing knowledge base.

To support the Multilateral Framework, Canada and Alberta signed a bilateral funding agreement under which Alberta receives up to $25.1 million. This reports details Alberta ministry programs eligible for funding under the Multilateral Framework.

[3] This data does not include the incomes of people who reported no "earned" income, but who have income from other sources such as government benefits or transfers. Also, data is not gathered from people living in institutions.

ALBERTA PROGRAMS

While Alberta delivers numerous programs and services to persons with disabilities, only specific programs offered by the ministries of Alberta Human Resources and Employment, Alberta Seniors and Community Supports and Alberta Health and Wellness are cost shared under the bilateral agreement.

Alberta Human Resources and Employment

Alberta Human Resources and Employment (AHRE) provides several services designed to help individuals with a disability overcome barriers to preparing for, gaining, or maintaining employment. AHRE programs and services include:

- Disability Related Employment Supports

  Disability Related Employment Supports (DRES) provides ongoing employment supports to help persons with disabilities to complete AHRE programs, enter the workforce, maintain employment, and complete their education through post-secondary institutions, basic training or academic upgrading. DRES consists of four components: workplace supports, job search supports, educational supports and assistive technology. Individuals may receive help in the form of sign language interpreters, work site modifications such as a wheel chair ramps, tutors, student assistants, note takers, talking dictionaries and Braillers. In 2004/05, 1,127 Albertans with disabilities received ongoing employment supports under DRES.[4] Recent survey results indicate clients are more likely to be employed after receiving DRES supports (50 percent) than prior to receiving these supports (39 percent).[5]

- Work Foundations

  Work Foundations programs are open to all Albertans including disabled persons. Programs help individuals receive basic skills training so they can pursue further job related training and/or find a job and substantially improve their employment situation. About 1,750 Albertans with disabilities participated in Work Foundations programs in 2004/05. When surveyed post-intervention, 31 percent of participants with disabilities indicated they were employed or self-employed. In addition, 19 percent were either in training or waiting for training.[6]

- Training for Work

  The Training for Work program assists low-income Albertans including disabled persons in gaining occupational skills and some basic academic and/or employability skills needed to obtain employment and become self-sufficient. The program also

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[4] Due to the ongoing nature of the supports provided, there are no "completions" to report.
[5] AHRE, "*Evaluation of Three Programs Cost-Shared by Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities,*" 2004.
[6] Data is drawn from the Work Outcomes Reporting Project (WORP), a follow-up survey of a representative sample of AHRE clients. Due to self-reporting, this likely underestimates the number of persons with disabilities. This data source does not track program completions.

helps low-income Albertans who already have basic skills and work experience but require additional training to find and maintain employment and remain self-sufficient. Approximately 1,290 Albertans with disabilities participated in Training for Work programs in 2004/05. Survey results indicate 60 percent of participants with disabilities were employed or self-employed post-intervention.[7]

Alberta Health and Wellness

Alberta Health and Wellness funds Regional Health Authorities that provide supports for employment through vocational rehabilitation programs. These programs provide an integrated vocational and clinical approach to the delivery of vocational rehabilitation services to people with severe and persistent mental illness.

Vocational rehabilitation approaches include vocational counseling, skill training, volunteer work experiences, unpaid pre-vocational work units, sheltered workshops, paid work crews, workplace interventions, day programs, transitional employment, supportive employment and comprehensive approaches (e.g. clubhouses, assertive community treatment).[8]

Alberta Seniors and Community Supports: Persons with Developmental Disabilities

The Alberta Provincial Board for Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD) funds six regional community boards to ensure a range of supports, including employment supports, are available to approximately 9,100 adult Albertans with developmental disabilities. The community boards contract with community service providers to provide employment supports throughout the province.

The PDD Employment Supports Program consists of two components: Employment Preparation and Employment Placement supports. Employment Preparation Supports are designed to assist individuals in developing skills for employment and exploring the world of work. Employment Placement Supports help individuals to maintain employment and/or self-employment. In 2004/05, 3,029 Albertans with developmental disabilities participated in PDD Employment Support Programs, 1,746 of whom subsequently maintained or obtained employment.[9]

PDD defines employment as activities that meet the following criteria:

- the individual receives remuneration for work performed;
- an employer/employee relationship exists; and
- Alberta Employment Standards Code applies.

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[7] Data is drawn from the Work Outcomes Reporting Project (WORP), a follow-up survey of a sample of AHRE clients. Due to self-reporting, this likely underestimates the number of persons with disabilities. This data source does not track program completions.

[8] As a variety of programs are funded across nine Regional Health Authorities, consistent and accurate data on the number of participants is not available.

[9] Due to the ongoing nature of the supports provided, there are no "completions" to report.

Joint Initiative

Starting in 2005/06, Alberta Human Resources and Employment, Alberta Seniors and Community Supports, and Alberta Health and Wellness will undertake a joint initiative to develop new and innovative approaches to meet the employment needs of Albertans with disabilities. The *Training and Development Demonstration Project for Persons with Disabilities* uses an integrated learning and employment supports model to enhance employment for persons with disabilities. Goals of the project include increasing communities' and employers' awareness of the potential pool of skilled labour among persons with disabilities as well as the resources available to support them in the workplace, and to increase the willingness of employers to hire persons with disabilities. Programs will be piloted in eight locations across the province, beginning in November 2005.

ALBERTA 2004-2005 EXPENDITURES (unaudited)

Ministry/Service Provider	Program	Expenditures
Alberta Human Resources and Employment	Disability Related Employment Supports	$10,400,659
	Work Foundations	$13,574,170
	Training for Work	$1,915,725
Alberta Health and Wellness	Vocational Rehabilitation Programs	$1,739,172
Alberta Seniors and Community Support: Persons with Developmental Disabilities	Employment Preparation and Placement Supports	$24,471,000
Total Provincial Expenditures		$52,100,726
Maximum Federal Contribution		$25,190,332